

REMARKS

Summary Of The Office Action & Formalities

The Office Action indicates that claims 1-12 are all the claims pending in the application. By this Amendment, Applicant is amending claims 8, 9, and 11, and adding new claim 13. No new matter is added.

Applicants note that the transmittal letter of January 31, 2001 that filed the present Application instructed the USPTO to cancel claims 1-7. Accordingly, claims 8-12 should be the only claims currently pending. The Examiner is kindly requested to confirm the same.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging the claim to foreign priority and for confirming that the certified copies of the priority documents were received in parent Application No. 09/527,304.

Applicant is filing herewith an Information Disclosure Statement citing the references of record in parent Application No. 09/527,304, now U.S. Patent 6,339,273, that are not of record in the present Application.

Applicant is also amending the Specification to refer to the patent that issued from the parent application.

Applicant is filing proposed drawing changes labeling Figs. 8 and 9 as "Prior Art."

Applicant is amending the title to be more specific. If the Examiner continues to object to the title, the Examiner is kindly requested to propose an appropriate alternative title.

Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Fig. 8. As noted above, claims 1-4 are not pending in the present application, accordingly this rejection is moot.

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
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Claims 6-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Fig. 8 in view of Miyaji et al. (USP 5,381,066). As noted above, claims 6 and 7 are not pending in the present application, accordingly the rejection of these claims are moot.

Claim 5 is allowed. However, as noted above, Applicants canceled claim 5.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 8-12.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. § 103

In rejecting claims 8-12, the grounds of rejection take the position that Fig. 8 discloses all the features recited in these claims, "except for having a wall member for blocking lubricant oil splashed from the bearing." Office Action at page 3.

The grounds of rejection then rely on Miyaji et al. to argue that this reference teaches

that it is known to utilize a sealing member (75) forming a labyrinthine sealing structure and preventing leakage of contaminants such as lubricating agents.

It would have been obvious . . . to have used sealing members as taught by Miyaji et al. and to have modified the device as disclosed in applicant Figure 8 since such as modification according to column 6, lines 15-22 would form a labyrinthine sealing structure and prevent leakage of contaminants.

Office Action at page 3.

Applicant has amended claim 8 to clarify the structure for circulating the lubricant oil as described in the Specification at page 17, line 18 to page 18, line 17. In particular, amended claim 8 requires the gap to be "determined to such an extent that the splashed lubricant oil attached to the blocking wall member and depended therefrom returns again onto an outer circumferential wall of the bearing."

Miyaji et al. is absolutely silent with respect to this feature, and clearly this reference would not have taught or suggested the same. Indeed, referring to Fig. 2, Miyaji et al. discloses an annular sealing member 75 that forms a gap with the rotor shaft 62 and not with an outward vertical face of the bearing. Furthermore, the gap is disposed radially inward with respect to the opening between the inner and outer bearing rings, such that the centrifugal force on any lubricant leaking from the opening between the bearing rings would cause the lubricant to migrate away from the gap. Additionally, since the sealing member 75 is disposed below the bearing rings, the structure would not teach or suggest the feature of having the gap configured so that "the splashed lubricant oil attached to the blocking wall member and depended therefrom returns again onto an outer circumferential wall of the bearing."

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that it would not have been obvious to modify the structure disclosed in Applicant's Fig. 8 as argued in the grounds of rejection, and the Examiner is kindly requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections of claims 8-12.

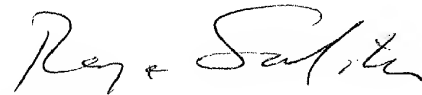
Applicant is adding new claim 13, which depends from claim 8 and further recites that "the gap is determined to such an extent that the splashed lubricant oil adheres again onto the outer circumferential wall of the bearing." Claim 13 is believed to be allowable, since Miyaji et al. is also silent with respect to this feature.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

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Applicant hereby petitions for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee, except for the Issue Fee, for such extension is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-4880.

Respectfully submitted,



Raja Saliba
Registration No. 43,078

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
2100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20037-3213
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

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